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AUTHOR	Gormley, William T., Jr.
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ABSTRACT

In the face of social changes that are increasing the demand for available, affordable, quality child care, it is difficult to continue to think of child care as a purely private issue. This book presents an analysis of the state of American child care. It evaluates child care policies and the national attention given to young children and their families. There are seven chapters in this book. Chapter 1, "Private Headaches, Public Dilemmas," sets forth the position that child care has not yet secured a firm niche on the public agenda, and emphasizes the reasons why the government has special responsibilities to care for poor children who need high-quality child care. This chapter also discusses the research methodology used for the research reported in the book. Chapter 2, "Child Care as a Social Problem," describes recent changes in the child care market from work, family, parental, and societal perspectives. Chapter 3, "Child Care as an Institutional Problem," considers both the formal and informal institutions that together comprise the child care infrastructure. This chapter also introduces several procedural criteria that may be used to evaluate the current system. Chapter 4, "Markets and Black Markets," focuses on the quality of care in two settings: for-profit group day care centers and unregulated family day care homes. Chapter 5, "Do's, Don'ts, and Dollars," subjects government to the same scrutiny that the child care industry received in Chapter 4. This chapter focuses on regulatory reform, categorical grants, and block grants. Chapter 6, "Do-Gooders, Go-Getters, and Go-Betweens," claims that intermediary institutions--schools, churches, businesses, and resource and referral agencies--should be encouraged to provide, subsidize, further develop, and improve child care. Chapter 7, "Reinventing Child Care," discusses four kinds of child care reform models and concludes that with the right incentives, coordination, and discretion, a better world for children can be achieved. Contains an

index and a list of references for each chapter. (MOK)

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